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**State Emergency Management Agency Officials urge Caution When Using
Generators for Alternate Power Source**

Clanton, Alabama - Officials with the Alabama Emergency Management Agency are urging Hurricane Ivan storm victims to use extreme caution when using generators as an alternate source of power until their utility company restores service.

"Portable generators are useful when remote electric power is needed, but they can also be extremely hazardous causing electric shock, electrocution, fire, and carbon monoxide poisoning," said Bruce Baughman, Director, Alabama Emergency Management Agency.

The following are some simple steps to take to prevent loss of life and property resulting from improper use of portable generators:

- Always use generators outdoors, away from doors, windows and vents.
- NEVER use generators in homes, garages, basements, crawl spaces, or other enclosed areas, even with ventilation.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions.
- Test carbon monoxide alarms often and replace batteries when needed.
- NEVER plug the generator into a wall outlet. This practice, known as backfeeding, can cause an electrocution risk to utility workers and others served by the same utility provider.

Here are some additional tips to storm victims to follow after the storm strikes:

- Avoid loose or dangling power lines and report them immediately to the utility company, police, or fire department.
- If you see sparks or broken or frayed wires or if you smell hot insulation, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker and contact an electrician for assistance.
- Check refrigerated foods for spoilage and throw out any questionable food. Remember that dairy products and meats spoil quickly without refrigeration and should be thrown out if they have not had cooling for several hours. Do not rely on your sense of smell. It is not a good idea to salvage food by cooking it and keeping it un-refrigerated for a few days.
- Take pictures of the damage to both house and its content for insurance purposes.

For more information on after the storm safety go to www.ema.alabama.gov